DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 295 HE 023 470

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TITLE The Making of a Professor.
PUB DATE Apr 90
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the National Conference of the American Association for Higher Education (San Francisco, CA, April 1-4, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; *Educational Change; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; *Instruction; Preservice Teacher Education; Professors; *Teacher Education; Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

There is a need for reform of the structures and processes by which graduate students turn into professors, and reform of the way academic work is defined and rewarded. A respect for the science and art of teaching as an intellectual field should be fostered in college faculty. Pedagogy is undervalued because most scholarship in pedagogy has focused on the study of teaching and learning in general, across all subjects. To appreciate the rich complexities of teaching, teachers must go beyond general methods and look closely at particular pedagogies useful to promote understanding of particular subjects. Pedagogy should be more rooted than it has been, with faculty within departments being considered sources of expertise and with development of a new infrastructure designed to nurture and reinforce professional discourse about teaching. A project called The Teaching Initiative is being launched with the goals of: developing prototypes of case materials and case-based instructional methods for use in programs preparing faculty for teaching roles; cosponsoring a conference on teacher assistant training; and developing new criteria and standards for faculty performance in areas such as creative scholarly work, teaching, and profession-based service. (JDD)

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
National Conference on Higher Education
April 1-4, 1990
San Francisco, California

THE MAKING OF A PROFESSOR

Remarks by

Russell Edgerton
President

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Note: In recent years I've given summary remarks at the close of our conference. But doing so takes time away from our "town meeting," and the remarks come too late to serve as a genuine basis for discussion. This year, continuing to experiment, I'm offering my remarks early on, in writing, so that they might serve as a basis for discussion at our plenary session breakfast Wednesday morning. We are particularly eager to have your reactions to The Teaching Initiative that is outlined in the final pages.--R.E.

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Nothing short of the Gettysburg Address seems quite up to the occasion of addressing this 1990 National Conference. To launch a new decade, to contemplate a brand new century, and to do so from a stage set by the breathtaking events of 1989--it's a giddy feeling indeed.

As we meet, wonderful things are happening around the world. But I for one feel sobered, and increasingly alarmed, by what's not happening in our own country. Look beneath the surface, and it's clear that we are slipping--slipping in dealing with our underclass, in investing in our children, in educating our work force, in developing the strategic industries through which we can earn our national living.

The fact that our President, who has avoided tackling the tough issues, can sail along with an 83% approval rating makes me wonder what we have come to expect of ourselves. But I continue to believe that thoughtful Americans everywhere are yearning for leadership--including leadership from higher education.

So it is more important than ever to ask whether, as an association that spans all of higher education, we are calling attention to the right priorities and developing the most promising strategies for addressing these priorities.

For the past five years this annual meeting has focused on various direct ways to improve the quality of undergraduate education. In 1985 we heard from the authors of the NIE report, Involvement in Learning, that quality education involves "high expectations," "involvement," and "feedback." We've been elaborating on these ideas ever since.

In 1986, Patricia Cross addressed the topic, "Taking Teaching Seriously," asking our attention to what goes on inside the classroom. Her message was so obviously compelling that it became the theme of our 1987 National Conference and the guiding spirit for the 1988 and 1989 conferences as well.

With this year's conference theme, "Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Faculty," we turn to face a new set of issues. During

this decade, many of the faculty who came into higher education during the spectacular boom years of the 1960's will begin passing the baton to a new generation of faculty. New issues have already surfaced. The prospect of shortages in critical fields. The desperate need for faculty of color. The strains, within and among our institutions, created by campus leaders who, in their scramble for talent, are behaving more and more like corporate raiders. We will be addressing all these "pipeline" issues at this meeting.

In doing so, it's especially fitting that we are meeting here in California, where alarm bells about these issues have long been ringing--and where campuses have already thought through ways to respond.

But there is another agenda at this meeting that is even more prominent than the first. It's not how can we increase the flow of talent through the pipeline, but how can we repair the pipes. It's the need for reform: reform of the structures and processes through which graduate students turn into professors; and reform of the way academic work is defined, and how this work is rewarded.

It's not often that we are able to arrive at an organizing intellectual perspective that gives shape and architecture to a major portion of our program. The study of <u>The New American Scholar</u>, now being completed by Ernest Boyer and Eugene Rice at the Carnegie Foundation, offers just this--and I am deeply grateful that both can be with us to launch the reform part of our discussion.

Their thesis is that behind many of the current headline problems in higher education--from our neglect of undergraduates to our unresponsiveness to social needs--is a deeper problem: the underlying conception of what sort of scholarly activity is and is not worthwhile. They argue that the kind of specialized research carried out in research universities, while indispensable, is but one form of scholarship and it's time to give the other forms their due.

What's especially appealing is the way this broader view of scholarship recasts the sterile debate about teaching versus research. Rather than debate what "weight" should be attached to research, we are encouraged to think harder about what distinctive forms of scholarship--from specialization to integration and synthesis to applying knowledge in the solution of social problems--best fit our distinctive campus missions. Instead of assuming that teaching and research are like two kids on a teeter-totter--when one is up, the other must be down--we are encouraged to consider where teaching fits in to the larger scheme of scholarly knowing.

As you know, all registrants for this conference will receive a copy of the report as soon as it is published. You're in for a treat.

Preparing Faculty as Teachers

As my own contribution to our deliberations, I would like to connect the growing interest in teaching that we've had these past few years to our new concern at this year's meeting with the future professoriate.

In retrospect it is remarkable how little attention the reform reports of the mid-80's gave to the deeper structures and processes that lie behind the curriculum and the teaching we offer--the structures that shape the making of the professoriate, and the work professors perform.

This seems particularly striking in contrast to the problems facing our nation's elementary and secondary schools, where my own attention has been focused recently. There's nothing like traveling to another culture to get a perspective on one's own. In our schools, which are organized like factories and where teachers are treated like blue-collar workers, the conditions of work are themselves a massive deterrent to effective teaching and learning.

In contrast, our faculties have enormous professional discretion. Yes, there are huge classes. Yes, there are bureaucracies to battle. But imagine the wonders our faculty could perform if only they were motivated, prepared, supported, and rewarded to be exemplary teachers.

The issue that intrigues me therefore, looking at the upcoming changing of the guard, is the opportunity for a second try at making a professor. In the 1960's, we were so caught up in building buildings, and organizing new institutions to keep up with enrollments, we had little time to stop and think about the teaching tasks that faculty were to perform, or how they should be prepared for these tasks. This time, we can do it right.

The question is, were we to muster our forces for a second try at preparing faculty to teach, what would we do?

The question typically leads to a discussion of who is responsible and where in the process more attention should be paid to teaching. Graduate schools are taken to task for their single-minded focus on research. The graduate schools retort that only half of their students are preparing for careers in teaching--and, besides, research is the backbone of teaching. The first years on the job, given the pressures for tenure, all energy must be focused on research. And on it goes.

Yet underneath all this buck passing lies a deeper issue, one we don't often discuss: what is the "it" that we think prospective professors should learn? Faculty become specialists--economists, chemists, biologists--by virtue of their mastery of a field of knowledge. They become "professors" when they are employed by our institutions and assigned classes to teach. What should a professor of biology know, and be able to do, that a biologist may not?

The Revival of Pedagogy

It is here I believe--in our assumptions, biases, stereotypes about the nature of the expertise required to be a good teacher--that we come to a key source of the problem. Most faculty have little respect for pedagogy itself.

I'm not talking here about the doing of teaching--which most faculty care about and many do quite well. I'm talking about respect for the science and art of teaching as an intellectual field. Few of the faculty who care about teaching and are good teachers would ever consider taking home an article to read about teaching, or consider teaching an intellectually engaging topic to discuss with a colleague. I'm talking about the poverty of professional discourse about teaching in the academic cultures of higher education.

Granted, the point can be overdone. The various disciplines have their journals on teaching and sessions on teaching at their annual meetings. Some of the teaching oriented liberal arts colleges and community colleges have managed to develop cultures where teaching is routinely discussed. But the more "prestigious" the campus becomes, the more the situation is as Diane Gillespie described in a recent article of Change magazine: "To talk publically about teaching as if it were meaningful is to embarrass oneself: it's like discovering at a dinner that you're eating someone else's salad."

Why should we care, especially since there seem to be faculty in our midst who are naturally good teachers without any help or formal training? Because they could be better, and because the other 75% to 90% of the faculty who are not "naturals" need help to acquire this expertise. To privatize teaching is to demean it.

So it behooves us to understand why pedagogy is so undervalued. Two characteristics of pedagogy in particular have limited their appeal to the larger faculty. First, most scholarship in pedagogy has focused on the study of teaching and learning in general. Inevitably, generalizations about how to lecture, how to lead discussion groups, and other issues concerning how to teach across all subjects skip over what most faculty consider the most important aspect of their teaching--the

knowledge they bring to class about the substance of the topic at hand.

Second, when most faculty think of learning how to teach, they think of the teacher training that goes on within departments and schools of education. And this brings to mind the stereotypes of a community striving to overcome its low status by constructing an edifice of deductive theory about what most faculty see as rather simple matters. The more elaborate the taxonomy, the stranger the words, the more "scientific" it all appears...and the less sense it makes to faculty who might otherwise be receptive.

The good news is that a new generation of scholars is now reshaping our understanding of what pedagogy is all about. They are shifting the paradigms and, in doing so, laying the foundations for a new pedagogy that can earn the respect of the faculty at large.

We heard about one of the new directions at last year's conference--Lee Shulman's address, "Toward a Pedagogy of Substance." Lee asked, what makes Jaime Escalante, the hero of the movie, Stand and Deliver, and the inspiration for our conference theme, a brilliant teacher? He went on to argue that observing Escalante's teaching through the lens of the "general methods paradigm" would reveal only some of the important things. Like his fierce belief that his students could succeed. Like his classroom antics (a "coronary P. T. Barnum").

What Escalante also had, Lee went on to argue, was an exceptional ability to transform difficult concepts of calculus into terms that students from the east barrio in Los Angeles could understand. He understood what preconceptions and misconceptions about the specific concepts at hand that his students brought into the class; and he had a range of metaphors, analogies, ways to demonstrate how these specific concepts might best be understood. Like explaining the concept of negative numbers with the metaphor of digging holes in the sand.

Lee's message is this: to appreciate the rich complexities of teaching, teaching that really produces understanding, we must go beyond general methods, get inside the subjects being taught, and look closely at the particular pedagogies that might be used to transform these subjects into terms the students can understand.

Paralleling this shift is another. A number of scholars are turning away from deductive theory toward what Donald Schon, author of The Reflective Practitioner, has called "the epistemology of practice." Teachers, they believe, must learn to be exemplary teachers like chess players must learn to become

master chess players--through experience, and systematic reflection on that experience. Theories, prior ideas about what to look for are important. But just as good lawyers know which legal precedents to apply to a particular case, so exemplary teachers know which ideas they should apply to the particular cases they face. To develop this expertise of critical analysis, teachers must learn to teach in the context of real or simulated teaching situations.

What these new directions add up to is a view that pedagogy should be more **rooted** than it has been--rooted in the substance of what is being taught, and rooted in the complexities of practice. The message is: we can best help a prospective professor "think like a teacher" if we do so in the specific context of what is being taught to whom.

What excites me about this message is that it appeals to faculty where they live. Here is a view of pedagogy that **includes** what is nearest and dearest to the heart of most faculty: their own disciplines. It says, teaching expertise is more than subject matter knowledge, and more than knowledge about general methods of teaching. **Transforming** what biologists know into knowledge that helps students learn is what deep teaching is all about. And here is a view of teaching that acknowledges that there are exemplary, "master" teachers among us all. We can all learn from them.

A Second Try at Turning Specialists into Professors

Suppose we were to base our second try at making professors around **this** more rooted conception of pedagogy. What would we do? How would our second try differ from the first?

Much more than at present, we would try to center the action **within** each academic department on campus to be the center of action. Department chairs would not assume that their role is only to send their faculty off to workshops about how to teach, sponsored by experts outside the department. Some of the expertise lies outside. But faculty within the department are also a source of expertise. We would ask each department, in effect, to view teaching as it approaches research--as a scholarly act, subject to continuous, ongoing peer review.

To support this aspect of departmental life, we would develop a new infrastructure--an infrastructure designed to nurture and reinforce professional discourse about teaching that is rooted in the fabric of departmental life. Academic divisions would perhaps develop materials and programs useful for prompting discussions by faculty who share the assumptions and interests common to natural scientists, social scientists, and humanists. The annual conventions and journals of each academic discipline would promote similar materials.

The materials and instructional methods themselves would rely more on stories, drama, cases--prompts for discussions that are based in particular incidents of teaching and learning. (Katherine Merseth at the University of California at Riverside is now working on a monograph for us on how professions like law and business turned to cases and case-based instruction as a key component of their curriculum. She makes a persuasive case that there is a bright future for case studies in helping faculty develop expertise about teaching.)

Nothing about this strategy, I hasten to add, would diminish the importance of learning about generic methods of teaching. There are important, fundamental things to be learned about teaching and learning across all disciplines. Nor would it remove the role of central staff units, such as centers of instructional or faculty development. But their role would change, in that they would become agent provocateurs for a new mode of conversation about teaching.

Enough of how to get from here to there. Let's look at what being "there" might mean and turn the clock forward to, say, 2001. Sparked in part by AAHE's 1990 National Conference, the decade of the 90's turned out to be a decade of vigorous reform. You get to do what you've always dreamed--to do it all over again. After some anguish, you finally decide not to go to law school and you enroll as a graduate student in the University of the 21st Century--a university that regards teaching as a truly professional activity. I'm going to put you in the political science department since there you can study almost anything.

Here are a few scenes from your future life:

Department orientation...The chair is explaining that, while many students are headed for careers in government and other non-academic settings, you all will be teachers with a capital "T"--that is, you will all have to communicate your specialized knowledge to others outside the field. The department regards teaching as Aristotle regarded it--as the highest form of understanding. Your qualifying exams, therefore, will assess not only your capacity for independent research, but your larger understanding of your field and your capacity to communicate it to others.

Your TA experience...The department views its TA positions, not as subsidies, but as apprenticeships in teaching, and carefully sequences the assignment TA's take on. After observing several master discussion leaders, you are preparing to take over a class and be the discussion leader. You and your professor meet for an hour in advance, to go over what you both know about the students, what the call pattern might be, where you hope the class will be at the end of the period. You are grateful that this planning session is being videotaped so you can review the

entire experience later on.

A turning point...You decide, after passing your qualifying exams, to take one of the "teaching residency" positions that are now widely available at liberal arts colleges. While working on your dissertation half time, you will be teaching a class under the supervision of gifted teacher/scholar.

"Grand rounds"...when all the teaching residents at the college gather to discuss a particular case from their classroom experience, has just ended. Your professor comes up to you and says that he thinks your case study should be submitted to the prestige journal in the profession. You had thought that it should go to the journal specifically devoted to teaching, but your mentor notes that the profession is now much more open in the interrelationship between teaching and research than it used to be; the journal publishes a teaching case in nearly every issue.

Now an assistant professor...you are sitting in your office, working on your course syllabus. The department chair has said everyone in the department should exchange new syllabi as freely as they share proposals for research, and you are wondering who among your colleagues you'd like to get comments from. You finally select a colleague who had visited your class last semester--the one who pointed out that few students understood what you meant by "middle class."

Preparing for tenure...You are grateful that the ordeal was put off until the eighth year, so you could prove yourself as both teacher and scholar. You've taken your mentor's advice, and published several first-rate articles rather than cranked out quantities of stuff like they used to do in the 90's. All that remains is to put together your teaching portfolio. You decide to include the video of your explanation of party identification to the international students; your essay, looking back over how your examinations had changed, and why; and your review of the textbooks being used in introductory American Government that had stirred such debate at the last annual meeting. You know you are a good political scientist. You think you are a pretty good professor as well.

A Role for AAHE: The Teaching Initiative

Do we want to bring about a future where scenes like these could be more common? I hope we do--and I think there is a role for AAHE in doing so.

For years we have used this National Conference, and the AAHE Bulletin, to give priority attention to issues of teaching.

But as we have found with several other major issues--assessment being one, collaborations among schools and colleges being another--a leadership role requires sustained attention throughout the year. It requires a talented professional staff person in our national office to help shape a distinctive program of R&D, conference, and publications activities. With such a capability, we can mobilize talent around the country into a new force for change.

What always constrains an association like AAHE from providing such leadership is the lack of venture capital--funds to underwrite the time of a talented staff person to move forward on the kind of agendas I've outlined above. Funds to refine ideas, design well-conceived projects, and get these projects off the ground.

I'm delighted to announce that Allen Jossey-Bass, the founder of Jossey-Bass Publications, has pledged to provide AAHE with a gift of $50,000, to be used to launch what we are calling The Teaching Initiative.

Allen's gift is being made in honor of Kerry Smith, who served as Executive Director of AAHE from 1954-1971, and then worked with Allen at Jossey-Bass for many years. It was Kerry, really, who founded AAHE as an independent association in 1969. Nothing could be more fitting, as we look toward a new decade, and a new century, than to launch, in Kerry's name, an initiative to strengthen the core of what higher education is all about--the process of teaching and learning.

Patricia Hutchings, who has served for the past three years as Director of AAHE's Assessment Forum, will direct the new initiative. Many of you know Pat for her persistent advocacy of the view that the purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. Since being a faculty member (and poet) is in her bones, she looks forward to becoming our resident teacher/scholar on teaching.

We are already at work on some initial ideas.

--We are hoping to develop prototypes of case materials and case-based instructional methods that might be used in programs preparing faculty for teaching roles.

--In cooperation with the Council of Graduate Schools, we are planning to cosponsor another national conference on TA Training, hosted by the University of Texas, in November of 1991.

--We are working with Gene Rice and Ernest Boyer to follow up the publication of <u>The New American Scholar</u> with a project that will develop new criteria and standards for

faculty performance in areas such as creative scholarly work, teaching, and profession-based service.

Best of all, Allen's generous gift will enable us to work more closely and continuously with the growing numbers of faculty who are joining AAHE--and especially the faculty who are participating, this year and last, in our special Forum on Exemplary Teaching. Over 400 faculty are at this meeting, and some 180 are here to participate in our special forum. If we can but give voice to the insights and ideas of those wonderful teachers, Pat and I know that the teaching initiative will be in good hands.